

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AGR-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 INT-08

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 STR-08 RSR-01

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R 222220 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1974

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EIND, PINT, JM

SUBJ: SEAGA'S COMMENT ON BAUXITE LANDS; GOVERNMENT LAND ACQUISITION

REF: A. KINGSTON 1638; B. KINGSTON 1622

1. SUMMARY: COORE CALLS SEAGA'S BAUXITE STATEMENT COMPLETELY FALSE AND PRIME MINISTER DENIES ANY SUCH PROGRAM. PRIME MINISTER HINTS, HOWEVER, THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD ABSORB UNUTILIZED AGRICULTURAL LANDS IF OTHER BUYERS CANNOT BE FOUND. SEAGA TELLS OF GOVERNMENT'S THREE PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MAY 21 GLEANER FRONT-PAGED A QUOTE OF THE MAY 16 REMARK BY EDWARD SEAGA (REF B) ON THE PURPORTED GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS OF A PLAN FOR THE ACQUISITION OF UNUSED BAUXITE LANDS. IN THE CONTEXT OF A DISCUSSION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW PROPERTY TAX PROGRAM, THE GLEANER QUOTES SEAGA AS FOLLOWS: " FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S LAND ACQUISITION APPETITE IS TO BE GAINED FROM THE FACT THE THE GOVERNMENT BEGAN MINISTERIAL DISCUSSIONS

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ON MONDAY (MAY 14 - A REGULAR CABINET MEETING) ON A PROPOSAL TO TAKE OVER ALL UNUTILIZED BAUXITE LAND, INCLUDING MINING LAND."

3. THE SAME EDITION OF THE GLEANER CARRIES THE TEXT OF A SUNDAY NIGHT RADIO AND TV SPEECH BY FINMIN DAVID COORE IN WHICH WITH REFERENCE TO OPPOSITION TACTICS HE SAID, " OTHER TACTICS ARE ALSO LIKELY TO BE EMPLOYED. AS FOR EXAMPLE THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO AN OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN THAT GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO EXPROPRIATE LANDS OWNED BY THE BAUXITE COMPANIES. THIS, OF COURSE, IS COMPLETELY FALSE."

4. GLEANER POINTS OUT THAT SEAGA DID NOT USE THE WORD " EXPROPRIATE ."

5. AS IF TO LEND CREDENCE TO SEAGA' S ASSERTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT' S LAND ACQUISITION APPETITE, THE PRIME MINISTER IS REPORTED BY THE GLEANER TO HAVE TOLD A PNP MEETING IN MONTEGO BAY ON SUNDAY NIGHT THAT, IF LANDOWNERS DID NOT PLACE THEIR LANDS INTO PRODUCTION (TO AVOID HIGHER TAX RATES), THEY SHOULD SELL TO SOMEONE WHO WOULD DO SO. IF THERE WERE NO BUYER, THEN THE LAND COULD BE SOLD TO THE GOVERNMENT SO THAT IT COULD LEASE IT OUT TO THE PEOPLE.

6. SEAGA TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON MAY 21 THAT, ACCORDING TO HIS SOURCES, THE BAUXITE SCHEME WAS THE SECOND OF THREE MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS THE GOJ WAS PLANNING FOR THE SPRING. THE FIRST - THE NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM - HAD BOMBED, ACCORDING TO SEAGA, AND WITH HIS DISCLOSURE OF THE CABINET DISCUSSION ON BAUXITE, THE SECOND, WHICH INVOLVED MAJOR JAMAICAN AND JAPANESE INTERESTS AND THE USE OF UNUTILIZED BAUXITE LANDS, WAS PROBABLY DOOMED. THE THIRD ANNOUNCEMENT, ACCORDING TO SEAGA, IS TO BE A NEW NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM. SEAGA SAID THE THREE PROGRAMS WERE DESIGNED TO BOLSTER PNP CHANCES IN BYE- ELECTIONS FOR SEATS TO BE VACATED SHORTLY IN THE LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

7. COMMENT: SEAGA AND JLP LEADER SHEARER HAVE MADE A DETERMINED EFFORT TO DEBUNK THE GOVERNMENT' S EDUCATION PROGRAM, BUT IT PROBABLY REMAINS POPULAR WITH A MAJORITY OF JAMAICANS. IF SEAGA' S DESCRIPTION OF PNP BYE- ELECTION EFFORTS IS TRUE, THE THREE PROGRAMS ARE PRETTY BIG AMMUNITION.

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